

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 PRS-01 IO-03 SAB-01 SAM-01 /043 W

----- 082499

R 221115Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4948

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4109

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, SREF, SY, IS, ICRC

SUBJECT: REUNION OF GOLAN FAMILIES SEPARATED AS RESULT OF
ISRAELI OCCUPATION

REF: TEL AVIV 5477, DATED AUG. 20, 1975

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSION WITH LOCAL ICRC REP CHAPPUIS OCT. 21
CENTERED ON REUNION OF FAMILIES RESIDING ON GOLAN HEIGHTS
SEPARATED AS RESULT OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION. CHAPPUIS INDICATED
THAT RATE OF ISRAELI ACCEPTANCE OF SYRIAN APPLICANTS, USUALLY
BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY DRUZE, WISHING TO REJOIN THEIR FAMILIES
LIVING UNDER ISRAELI OCCUPATION HAS BEEN APPROXIMATELY HALF
OF RATE PREVAILING IN WEST BANK AND GAZA. WHEREAS SOME 40,000
OUT OF 400,000 WEST BANKERS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO RETURN TO
THEIR HOMES SINCE 1967, HE SAID, FIGURES FOR SYRIA AMOUNT TO
ABOUT 200 RETURNEES FROM NEARLY 4,000 APPLICANTS.

2. CHAPPUIS SAID THAT ACCORDING TO HIS RECORDS SO FAR
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IN 1975 ONLY SEVEN SYRIANS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO

RETURN TO ISRAELI-OCCUPIED GOLAN IN SPITE OF OVER ONE HUNDRED APPLICANTS APPROVED BY SARG. TOTAL IN 1974 WAS THIRTY SYRIANS, BUT THIS INCLUDED TWENTY-FIVE POLITICAL PRISONERS JAILED YEARS AGO AND RELEASED UNDER AMNESTY PRIVILEGES GRANTED BY PRES. ASAD. CHAPPUIS CONSIDERS THIS UNIQUE CASE IN WHICH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH ISRAEL. THUS OUT OF 97 APPLICANTS THROUGH REGULAR CHANNELS IN 1974, ONLY FIVE WERE SUCCESSFULLY REUNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES.

3. CHAPPUIS SEEMED TO FEEL THAT SITUATION HAD WORSENERD IN PAST FEW MONTHS. AS EVIDENCE, HE CITED SYRIAN REQUEST SUBMITTED IN SEPTEMBER 1974 COMPRISING 80 RETURNEES. ISRAELIS FINALLY RESPONDED IN APRIL 1975 WITH BLANKET REFUSAL FOR ENTIRE LIST. THIS, HE SAID, WAS "UNACCEPTABLE PROCEDURE" ON PART OF GOI IN DEALING WITH ONE OF BASIC HUMANITARIAN PROBLEMS OF THEIR OCCUPATION.

4. CHAPPUIS BELIEVES THAT SYRIA NOW WILLING TO LET FAMILIES COMMUNICATE ACROSS DISENGAGEMENT LINES (THIS WAS APPARENTLY SUBJECT OF PERES MEETING WITH DRUZE NOTABLES LAST AUGUST - REFTTEL).

5. CHAPPUIS CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT ISRAEL HAS SINGLED SYRIA OUT FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT ON ISSUE OF FAMILY REUNIONS, PERMITTING UNREALISTICALLY LOW NUMBER OF RETURNEES, BOTH IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE RATE AND ABSOLUTE FIGURES. HE CLAIMS THAT WHILE A RECOGNIZED PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH THESE CASES IN WEST BANK AND GAZA HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED AND WAS MOR OR LESS ADHERED TO, ISRAEL HAS NOT PUT INTO EFFECT SIMILAR PROCEDURE ON GOLAN. HIS CONCLUSION IS THAT "ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN RESPONSIVE ON THIS MATTER. IT COULD DO MUCH MORE TO FACILITATE SOLUTION OF THIS HUMANITARIAN ISSUE."
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, FAMILIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975DAMASC04109
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750367-0346
From: DAMASCUS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751030/aaaabaff.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: 75 TEL AVIV 5477
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REUNION OF GOLAN FAMILIES SEPARATED AS RESULT OF ISRAELI OCCUPATION
TAGS: PBOR, SREF, SY, IS, ICRC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006